NEWS

Yes on 6 organizers want Winchester residents to flip for CPA

CHRIS STEVENS | CORRESPONDENT

October 9, 2024 . 6:00 AM — 4 min read

Vote Yes on Question 6 organizers called Saturday, Oct. 6, a 'Great day to talk CPA at Friends of Wedge Pond Block Party!' COURTESY PHOTO/YES ON QUESTION 6 COMMITTEE

If voters remember to do only one thing on Election Day, Comm
Preservation Act organizers hope it will be to flip over the ballot.

Subscribe

The CPA question is number 6 on the ballot. It comes after five statewide questions about auditing the Legislature, MCAS, Uber drivers, tipped wages and psychedelic mushrooms. And Jen Ryan and David Miller, co-chairs of the Yes on 6 campaign are worried that it will get lost in the shuffle.

"It's a big election ... make sure you look at all the questions," said Ryan.

Question 6 would add a 1.5% surcharge to property tax bills. The funds can be used solely to preserve open space and historic sites, create affordable housing and develop outdoor recreational facilities.

Town Meeting approved both a CPA ballot question and a bylaw in May 132 to 21, Ryan said. But the question still needs to pass muster with voters before the bylaw can be enacted.

Ryan and Miller both said they are feeling optimistic about their chances. They've faced no real opposition during their "tabling events" mostly just people seeking clarification, Miller said.

Let's be clear

One clarification that's been made numerous times: "Is this a property tax? No, it's a surcharge on your property tax," Miller said.

According to the group's literature, the surcharge equals about $200 per household per year and comes with a state match. It is estimated to raise $1.9 million in the first year, but Ryan noted there are exemptions available for people that might not be able to afford it.

Once that is made clear, people want to know how the ultimate decisions on where to spend the money are made, Miller said.

Subscribe

The process of spending the money comes down to two things, Ryan said, local projects and local decisions. If the question passes at the ballot box, a survey will go out asking residents for their priorities when it comes to projects. After that a request for proposals will go out.

The Community Preservation Committee, made up of local volunteers, will make recommendations, but ultimately Town Meeting members will decide which projects to fund.

“So the entire process is sort of contained within Winchester, which for the people of Winchester is very important,” Miller said.

Who thinks this is a good idea?

“We have a great list of supporting and endorsing organizations,” Ryan said.

The list includes what Miller called a broad swath of town committees and boards: Select Board, Conservation Commission, School Committee, Planning Board, Capital Planning Committee, the state delegation and a number of private groups like the Winchester Historical Society, Friends of Wedge Pond, Friends of Winter Pond and the Network for Social Justice — to name a few.

“We’ve got a very nice grouping of meaningful endorsements, who I think themselves have significant memberships, who will also be part of the support of this whole thing,” Miller said. “We don’t want to jinx anything, but we’re feeling optimistic.”

There are also 196 communities across the state that have already adopted the act and 11 more have it on the ballot this November, Ryan noted.

Subscribe

Why adopt it at all?

Ryan said she believes the best thing about the CPA is that it's a powerful community engagement tool.

"Once it passes, once a community adopts it, there's a survey usually of town residents of what the priorities are," she said. "It's a great way for community groups to come together and to offer up proposals for small projects that can be hard to get funding for, as well as help the town move larger capital needs forward."

As a member of the Conservation Commission, Miller said he is aware of how many projects go unfunded for that department alone. The CPA, he said, could help with that.

Ryan and Miller both pointed out examples of projects that could potentially benefit from CPA funding: Winchester has 150 acres of open space and the trails need work, Wedge and Winter ponds need varying levels of restoration, the library is in need of repair as are the town's tennis courts.

"I'm actually also on the Housing Partnership board myself, so I've got that additional perspective on the other potential areas of investment by CPA funds," Miller added. "So, yeah, I think when we get this passed and we submit requests for proposals, they're going to be numerous."

But don't expect things to be funded immediately. Ryan said while there is a committee working on implementation plans, it will take time for money to accrue and details to be worked out. But Miller said they would still be able to hit the ground running because of the work the implementation committee is doing now.

But why now?

Subscribe

Ryan said another question they've gotten a lot is why hasn't Winchester done this sooner. While there have been other attempts, Ryan said it simply takes time for everything to line up and she believes this year it has.

"It's just that the time is right now," she said. "We're leaving money on the table by not adopting it."

For more information on Question 6, check out the Facebook page. Election Day is Nov. 5.

Winchester News is a non-profit organization supported by our community. If you appreciate having local Winchester news, please donate to support our work, and subscribe to our free weekly newsletter.

Related

NEWS

Winchester School Committee candidates bring contrasting backgrounds to Thursday forum

Two candidates for Winchester's School Committee will face voters at a forum as the district navigates a new literacy curriculum,

NEWS

Rep. Michael Day helps House colleagues pass sweeping energy affordability bill

The following was submitte of Rep. Michael S. Day: Rep. M d his colleagues in the House of

Subscribe

budget pressures and questions about student mental health. Heather von Mering and John Bellaire are competing for an open seat on the School Committee, which oversees a budget von

WILL DOWD | STAFF WRITER
March 4, 2026

Representatives recently passed energy affordability legislation that would result in over $9 billion in savings for utility ratepayers over the next 10 years. The bill maintains critical

March 4, 2026

NEWS

Winchester gun owners face new training rules starting April 2

Public safety data How Winchester compares on firearms licenses in comparable Massachusetts communities Active licenses as of Jan. 25, 2025 — Source: Massachusetts Criminal History Systems Board License to carry firearms Firearms identification card Winchester and Marblehead are the focus communities. Peers selected based on comparable population size, demographics and suburban

WILL DOWD | STAFF WRITER
March 4, 2026

NEWS

Sen. Jason Lewis, Mass. Senate strengthen fair housing protections for renters, buyers

The following was submitted by the Office of Sen. Jason Lewis: State Sen. Jason Lewis joined his colleagues in the Massachusetts Senate to pass legislation that protects residents from discrimination in the housing market as the Trump administration abandons its enforcement of the federal Fair Housing Act. Illegal discrimination continues

March 3, 2026

Latest

Subscribe

EVENTS

Celebrate Women's History Month with Girls Leading Change

The following was submitted by the Network for Social Justice: To mark Women's History Month and International Women's Day in 2026, the Network for Social Justice is collaborating with club leaders from Winchester High School and members of the Community Health team from La Colaborativa in Chelsea and

March 4, 2026

NEWS

Winchester School Committee candidates bring contrasting backgrounds to Thursday forum

Two candidates for Winchester's School Committee will face voters at a forum as the district navigates a new literacy curriculum, budget pressures and questions about student mental health. Heather von Mering and John Bellaire are competing for an open seat on the School Committee, which oversees a budget von

WILL DOWD | STAFF WRITER
March 4, 2026

FEATURES

'Chicago: Teen Edition' dances onto the Winchester High School stage

By Talia Ho | Correspondent Fame. Fortune. And all that jazz. This spring, Winchester

EVENTS

Ripley Chapel in Winchester presents 'Syldason: You Are Welcome Here'

The following was submitted by the Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church: On

Subscribe

High School presents “Chicago: Teen Edition,” a bold musical that explores celebrity culture, media manipulation, and the cost of ambition. This iconic production is set in the 1920s. Performances will take place on March 13 and 14

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS
March 4, 2026

Friday, March 13, beginning at 7:30 p.m., live in-person and live streamed from the stunning Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church, Winchester, 21 Church St., join in with Syldason, a duo concert featuring Sylvie Zakarian,

March 4, 2026

WINCHESTER NEWS
A TRUSTED AND RELIABLE SOURCE OF LOCAL NEWS

Subscribe to Winchester News

© 2026 Winchester News Group, Inc. Copying and sharing with permission for non-commercial use only.

Subscribe